UNITED
NATIONS

DP

Governing Council
of the
United Nations
Development Programme

Distr.
GENERAL

DP/1991/18
11 February 1991

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Thirty-eighth session
3-21 June 1991, New York
Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda

SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ASSISTANCE

Transport and Communications Decade in Africa

Report of the Administrator

SUMMARY

The present report is submitted in response to Governing Council decision 90/30 of 20 June 1990 on the Transport and Communications Decade in Africa (UNTACDA).

It reviews the role of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the First Decade (1978-1988) and the different components of its planned assistance to the Second Decade (1991-2000), including resource mobilization, implementation of projects, and co-ordination of the programme for the Second Decade. It provides estimated costs of such assistance.

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I. UNDP ASSISTANCE TO THE FIRST DECADE (1978-1988)

1. During the first United Nations Transport and Communications Decade in Africa (UNTACDA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), through the regional programme for Africa, spent a total of $106 million to finance projects included in the Decade. A total of $96 million was spent to finance pre-investment and technical co-operation projects executed by various United Nations agencies. The priority areas covered during the Decade included subregional integration, training and manpower development. The sum of $10 million was devoted to co-ordination activities, particularly through the establishment and reinforcement of a Co-ordination Unit within the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). Furthermore, UNDP financed the costs of the global evaluation of the Decade and the in-depth evaluation of the projects for the co-ordination of the implementation of the Decade, in 1988 and 1989 respectively.

2. Both of these evaluations observed that the Decade has had a positive impact, particularly by raising awareness of African Governments and the international community of the critical challenges which face Africa in the transport and communications sector, and by identifying policy and programme constraints which need to be addressed. They also noted the relatively poor achievement of the Decade in relation to its original objectives, particularly in terms of resource mobilization and project implementation. This was due to the inadequate preparation and co-ordination of the programme which, in turn, caused insufficient response by the international donor community.

3. The evaluation missions recommended that, if a Second Decade were to be implemented, the objectives of the First Decade, even though still valid, would require reformulation to make them more realistic and that all the parties involved, particularly African Governments, should be committed to adopting a new strategy for achieving them.

II. UNDP PLANNED ASSISTANCE TO THE SECOND DECADE (1991-2000)

4. The Conference of Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning at its meeting of March 1988, calling for a Second Decade, recommended that the two years, 1989-1990, should be devoted to preparatory activities. In November 1989, the same Conference reformulated the objectives with greater emphasis on maintenance, human resources development and technical co-operation and agreed on a new strategy for the preparation of the Second Decade which would ensure the effective participation of all the parties involved in the Decade. This includes new structures established specifically for the Second Decade, namely the National Co-ordination Committees, the Sectoral and Subregional Working Groups and the Resource Mobilization Committee.

5. In response to the request of the Conference of Ministers of November 1989, UNDP approved project RAF/89/016 "Support to the Preparation and Launching of UNTACDA II", valued at $2.7 million, to assist in the preparation of the programme for the Second Decade.

6. The National Co-ordination Committees and the subregional and sectoral working groups were scheduled to complete their preparatory programmes in December 1990. The draft regional programme for UNTACDA II will be submitted to the Conference of African Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning, in February 1991 for approval. It is expected that UNDP will be requested at that time to provide further assistance for the implementation and co-ordination phase. The following paragraphs summarize the possible scope, modalities and costs of such assistance.

A. Resource mobilization

7. Under project RAF/89/016, UNDP is presently financing the activities of the Resource Mobilization Committee, which provides guidance to the National Co-ordination Committees and the working groups. The idea behind the establishment of the Resource Mobilization Committee, which includes major international financing institutions (African Development Bank (AfDB), the World Bank, the European Economic Community (EEC) and UNDP), the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and ECA, was to increase the credibility of the programme and put the participating institutions in a better position to finance or seek financing for projects of the Second Decade.

8. During the implementation of the Second Decade, UNDP will continue to assist the Resource Mobilization Committee, which will focus on the promotion of projects and programmes, the selection of which it will have participated in. The Committee will be responsible for building the consensus on specific objectives and the ordering of priorities within the framework of the programme, with a view to drawing up a plan for their financing. It will also continue to provide guidance to the National Co-ordination Committees and the working groups for the implementation and co-ordination of their programmes. It will prepare for the consideration of the African Governments and the Inter-Agency Co-ordination Committee annual reports on the impact of financial and macro-economic conditions on the development of the transport and communications sectors in Africa.

9. According to the terms of reference of the Resource Mobilization Committee, each member is free to contact any donor in order to promote the Decade programme. For its part, UNDP will make every effort to establish cost-sharing arrangements for the projects and programmes that it implements in support of the Second Decade.

B. Implementation

10. The ultimate objective of the Second Decade is the establishment of an integrated transport and communications system throughout the African continent, with particular emphasis on the harmonization, co-ordination, modernization, proper operations, management and maintenance of existing systems, as well as their efficient utilization.

11. Pursuant to this objective and to Governing Council decision 90/34 of 23 June 1990, any UNDP projects for the Decade will aim at contributing to the building and strengthening of national capabilities to plan, implement and co-ordinate transport and communications programmes.

12. At the national level, the African Governments will be encouraged to continue to assist the National Co-ordination Committees in implementing national programmes that will focus on issues such as the management of existing infrastructures, the maintenance and development of rural roads and urban transport, the improvement of safety and security and the protection of the environment.

13. At the subregional and regional levels, UNDP will continue to support major projects initiated during the fourth programming cycle which cover three priority areas: human resources and institutional development, subregional and regional integration; and the development of manufacturing capabilities. In supporting programmes in these areas, UNDP will take account of the conclusions and recommendations of the in-depth evaluations, as well as of various case and modal studies undertaken for the benefit of the transport and communications sector in Africa.

14. With regard to human resources and training, the following projects will benefit from further UNDP assistance:

(a) The project on human resources and institutional development in the transport and communications sector in Africa is carried out in conjunction with seven projects executed by various United Nations agencies and institutions. During the first phase of this project, funded from Special Programme Resources (SPR), case studies were carried out to identify the factors that promote or constrain satisfactory organizational and human resources performance in African transport and communications institutions. A second phase will be financed to implement the recommendations of the first phase and will focus on policy reforms and training programmes for African managers;

(b) The project in support of training institutions in civil aviation, maritime transport and telecommunications. UNDP will continue to assist some of these institutions, identified on the basis of evaluations and consultations with participating countries and organizations, with a view to achieving sustainability and self-reliance in management, the training of trainers, the production of training materials and financial viability.

15. As regards subregional and regional integration, further assistance will be provided to three regional projects:

(a) The Pan-African Telecommunications Programme (PANAFTEL). During the fourth programming cycle, the Pan-African Telecommunications Union (PATU) and various other intergovernmental organizations have been increasingly involved in the execution and monitoring of the programme. For the fifth programming cycle, UNDP assistance will aim at strengthening PATU and other relevant African organizations to enable them to take over, in the medium-term, the responsibility for the implementation and co-ordination of the programme;

(b) The Regional African Satellite Communications system (RASCOM). UNDP provided assistance for the preparatory phase and the feasibility study of this project, which was executed with the active participation of several European Governments and the African Governments. UNDP will continue to support African

Governments in setting up human resource capabilities and mechanisms through which they will assume responsibility for the implementation phase of the project;

(c) The project on transit traffic and support to the transport sector, which is composed of three subregional projects (Southern, Eastern, West/Central Africa). Assistance will continue into the fifth programming cycle to carry out follow-up activities such as the harmonization of customs procedures and documentation, the establishment of dry ports, cargo and wagon tracker, and the strengthening of trade facilitation committees within the member States.

16. Concerning the development of manufacturing capabilities, a project on the development of the manufacture of equipment for road, rail and maritime transport in Africa, funded from SPR, was recently launched in co-operation with ECA and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). For the fifth programming cycle, activities will be extended to cover the postal and telecommunications subsectors. The ultimate objective of this project is to develop the industrial capacity of African countries and to reduce the portion of foreign exchange earnings spent on the importation of equipment, accessories and spare parts. The project will also promote the transfer and adaptation of technology, as well as technical and economic co-operation among African countries.

C. Co-ordination

17. In keeping with the strategy used for the preparatory phase, a decentralized approach will be adopted for co-ordinating the implementation activities. In this context, National Co-ordination Committees and subregional working groups will be responsible for the implementation and co-ordination of their own programmes. In support of this decentralized approach, UNDP will establish a project to assist the National Co-ordination Committees and working groups. This assistance will take various forms, such as advisory missions, technical and financial studies, seminars and workshops, and will be provided in response to specific requests for assistance from the Committees and working groups. The activities under this project will be implemented, as appropriate, by United Nations agencies, African training institutes, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and through Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries (TCDC) arrangements.

18. This strategy has the advantage of facilitating the active participation of all parties concerned, including the parastatal and private sectors as well as the UNDP field offices which will be closely associated with the activities of the National Co-ordination Committees.

19. It is worth noting that advantage will also be taken of the outputs of project RAF/89/046, Development of a Transport Data Base in Sub-Saharan Africa, valued at $600,000, which was recently launched by UNDP in co-operation with the World Bank and ECA to set up and maintain a reliable transport data base in Africa. This is intended to assist African policy-makers and managers better to plan and monitor programmes in the transport sector.

D. Financial requirements

20. For the fifth programming cycle, UNDP assistance to the Second Decade has been estimated at $15 million, which represents 8 per cent of the regional indicative planning figure (IPF) resources. Out of this amount, about $3 million will be devoted to co-ordination activities.

21. The Governing Council will be informed, at its thirty-eighth session, of the progress, conclusion and outcome of the Conference of African Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning, expected to be held in February 1991, in particular as to their possible impact on UNDP support of and participation in activities for the Second Decade.